

6/25/68

PRESIDENT GEORGE CORLEY WALLACE

I want to suggest here that the Republican candidate for President, whoever he may be, is going to be a Trojan horse carrying Birch and Birch-fellow-traveller electors into the electoral college this fall.

In 1964 the nation learned to its dismay that radical right delegates controlled the Republican nominating convention. They were both conspiratorial and implacable. In 1968 we find the majority of delegates are moderate or liberal in their leanings, supporting Nixon or Rockefeller. Where have the hard-core rightists gone? Electors are chosen from among the party faithful. Have the rightwing 1964 delegates gracefully withdrawn to moderates and allowed themselves to be kicked upstairs into the honorary position of electors?

An elector may vote for whom he damn pleases. An Adlai Stevenson elector voted for a Walter B. Jones. In 1960 a Richard Nixon elector from Oklahoma bolted and voted for Harry Byrd. Thus there is not only a constitutional legality but a precedent. But, it will be objected, an elector would not dare to vote against the wishes of his constituents: he couldn't face the homefolks.

There is a way, however, that a Birch or fellow-travelling elector could be "set free" to join his vote to that of George Wallace. This is if the Republican candidate should die after the November 5th election and before the electoral votes are cast in mid-December.

It would not be necessary that the Republican candidate win most of the electoral votes for this scheme to work: all that is necessary is that the race be close, that the democratic candidate does not win an overwhelming majority of the electors. (There would probably be Birch electors among the democrats but not many.) A clear and overwhelming win by a northern democrat would make the above-described plot all but impossible to carry out. Only one candidate for the democratic nomination threatened to be this big winner: that was Robert Kennedy. He is now dead. The democratic party finds itself in something of a shambles. Humphrey is running about even with the posited Republican candidates in the polls, or even behind.

In the immediate aftermath of the Robert Kennedy assassination, Mike Mansfield called frantically for abolition of the electoral college and limited term of 6 years for a President. Articles appear regularly in the establishment and other press preparing the electorate for trouble in the electoral college. A climate of assassination has been created.

If the Birchers, fellow-travellers and conspirators have packed the Republican half of the electoral college (and we should remember that they controlled more than 500 delegates to the 1964 Republican convention) and if the Republican candidate wins or runs a close election and then dies, those fixed electors will be free to vote for George Wallace. Many of them would disappoint the homefolks if they didn't. Right-leaning Republicans loathe Humphrey: they would consider it a betrayal if their electors voted for him. They would want their votes to go to Wallace.

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D.B.